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# **Articles in Today's Clips**

## **Monday, December 12, 2005**

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# Prosecutors hope to use new law against alleged sex offender

Beginning Jan. 1, prior convictions for sex crimes against children admissable.

*PUBLISHED: December 12, 2005*

*By Chad Halcom*

*Macomb Daily Staff Writer*

Macomb County prosecutors plan on taking full advantage of a new law that would allow them to introduce the prior sex crime convictions of those accused of child molestation and sexual assault when Kou Xiong goes on trial next week.

The law, which is scheduled to take effect within weeks, would aid prosecutors in their case against the local defendant. He returns to court next week for a pretrial on sexual conduct charges in an unusual case of alleged abuse at a Warren public library in March.

Two Michigan courts have ruled that Xiong enjoys a legal protection that prevents his past from being used against him as evidence at an upcoming trial; but prosecutors could get his past introduced because the trial likely won't take place until after a new law signed by Gov. Jennifer Granholm goes into effect Jan. 1.

"It's exactly the kind of case this legislation is all about," said Suzanne Faunce, chief of the sex crimes unit for the Macomb County Prosecutor's Office. Faunce has been to Lansing and testified to lawmakers about Xiong and the issue.

"The court has even indicated to us that if this law were already adopted and on the books, then the prior (offense) would have to be admitted."

Xiong has a prior sex crime conviction from 1990.

It is a long-held staple of criminal law that a defendant's past crimes are off-limits during trial unless he testifies and the prior offenses have some bearing on his credibility. The reasoning is that jurors should not convict someone for being a "bad guy" but instead base their decision on evidence in the current case. The law passed by the Legislature in September and signed by Granholm makes an exception to that rule for sex crimes against children when the defendant has a prior conviction for another child sex crime.

Senate Sen. Alan Cropsey, R-DeWitt, who sponsored a preliminary version of that bill in the Senate, has said the exception would be helpful to prosecutors and recognizes that child sexual abuse is a special kind of crime.

"Especially when it comes to sex offenses, history is a big predictor of the future," Cropsey said of his bill in October.

But while Cropsey's bill ultimately gave way to a House bill with similar language that was passed and signed by the governor, the measure still comes with controversy.

David A. Moran, an associate professor who teaches criminal law at Wayne State University, said the legislation sends a troubling message for defendants' rights at trial.

"What's to stop a defendant from being convicted this time, simply because a jury is shocked or overwhelmed by what he did last time, or simply because he did something else the last time?" Moran said. "That's the real danger."

Although the new law is limited to sex crimes against underage victims, and the past crime must also involve a minor, Moran said it's troubling that the bill would not require much similarity or connection between the two crimes for the past one to be admissible; it also could be a precedent to allow past cases in other matters such as drug cases, he said.

The new rule resembles federal court rules, enacted 10 years ago, that allow prior conduct to be admitted in child molestation and sexual assault trials. Backers routinely cite the federal policy as a reason for making the change.

But practically speaking, sex crimes are rarely prosecuted at the federal level, leading detractors to argue that a rule change will be quite drastic in Michigan. At least one other state, California, has a similar rule.

Prosecutors point to California as proof that jurors can be fair. There, a jury heard past allegations that pop star Michael Jackson molested or had contact with five other boys. They found him not guilty in the case before them.

"Juries will put the evidence in the context that is deserved," Livingston County Prosecutor David Morse said. "As a rule, I have confidence in the intelligence and wisdom of the jury."

Morse, who pushed for the rule change on behalf of the Prosecuting Attorneys Association of Michigan, noted that just because evidence can be introduced doesn't mean a judge will allow it.

In Xiong's case, Macomb County Circuit Judge Edward A. Servitto Jr. ruled in October that Xiong's past conviction was inadmissible at his upcoming trial. That prompted Macomb prosecutors to file a pretrial appeal to the Michigan Court of Appeals, which issued a preliminary ruling to take the case under consideration but then ultimately refused to reverse the lower court.

That means Xiong's past is still out, but the delay in court, coupled with Xiong's recent request to change defense attorneys, now means he can't have a trial before the last jury can be impaneled for the year on the week of Dec. 15. That means his trial can begin in January or February at the soonest -- after the new law takes effect.

"The defense can try to argue that it's when his crime occurred that matters. But we contend it's when the trial occurs," said Molly Zappitell, the assistant prosecutor who will handle that trial.

"When the court (Servitto) made his initial ruling, it was contemplating a trial that would be held in December, before the new law. Now thanks to the defendant's own stupidity, everything has changed."

# POLICE BEAT

*Monday, December 12, 2005*

*Ann Arbor News*

## Children left alone at mall play area

A shopper at Ann Arbor's Briarwood Mall discovered two young children alone in a play area after their mother left them there while she was shopping Saturday morning, city police reported.

The woman said she noticed the two children in the play area by J.C. Penney at 10:30 a.m. when one began crying for his mother, reports said. The woman notified mall security, and the older child was able to tell the security guard her mother's name, so she was paged over the mall intercom, reports said.

Police were called, and the mother returned at about 11 a.m. The 37-year-old mother said she had shopping she needed to do, so she decided she would leave her 5-year-old daughter and 2-year-old son in the play area, reports said. She said she felt a lot of pressure about the holidays and wasn't thinking, and she said she would never leave the children again, reports said.

Child protective services also was called to investigate, reports said.

# Baker issues challenge to spiff up Florence Crittenton rooms

*Monday, December 12, 2005*

*By Pat Rombyerprombyer@citpat.com -- 768-4924*

*Jackson Citizen Patriot*

A class requirement that spiffed up a room at a home for abused and neglected girls has turned into a communitywide contest.

"I'd like to challenge other organizations to fix up rooms at Florence Crittenton," said Brad Schweda, chairman of the Human Services Department at Baker College.

The challenge will run until June, and contestants would be required to provide at least bed linens, window treatments and a fresh coat of paint. The winning group will be named "Volunteer Project of the Year" and receive a prize that has not yet been determined.

"Adolescents are really hard on the rooms," said Bob Powell, Crittenton Home executive director. "We try to do a room at a time, but it's very costly. Our priorities are making payroll and paying for essentials."

He said seven residential rooms are in bad shape and bathrooms also need renovating. In the past, churches and student groups have tackled a variety of rooms within the old building. Parts of it date back to 1921.

Each year, Schweda requires the students in his "Intro to Human Services" class to take part in three service learning projects.

This year, one of the projects was to raise money to redecorate a room at the Florence Crittenton Home, 1603 Lansing Ave. It is a child-care facility, home to about two dozen teenagers who have been removed from their homes because of abuse and/or neglect. Most are teenage mothers.

Crittenton Services also has at different locations: a transitional house, a home for homeless boys, a diversion program for first-time offenders and a re-entry program for incarcerated youth who are returning to the community.

"I like students to smell, taste and feel what it's like to work in the career they've chosen," Schweda said. "It excites and motivates them. Or, it may make them realize, 'I can't do this, it's not for me.'"

He said the rooms are ripe for redecorating.

"They aren't attractive; they're very institutional looking," Schweda said.

Some of the Florence Crittenton residents watched as the students replaced the ceiling, painted and stenciled the walls, shampooed the carpet and even washed the screens.

"The girls were excited about it," said Jennifer Curtis, 19, a social work student at Baker. "I think they saw our teamwork as really positive."

Tricia Glover, 45, of Manitou Beach, agreed.

"Each of the girls wanted the room to be theirs," Glover said. "It really shows you the other side of things."

*Sunday, December 11, 2005*  
*Wayne Briefs*  
*Detroit News*

**Dearborn Heights**

## Trial to begin on sex abuse charges

The jury trial will begin Monday for a Dearborn Heights man accused of sexually abusing his three daughters. The 44-year-old man, whose name is not being published to protect the children, is facing nine counts of criminal sexual conduct, four of them in the first degree. The charges stem from allegations of abuses over a six-year period to his daughters, who were all 12 or 13 years old. He will be tried in Judge Vonda R. Evans' courtroom in the Wayne Circuit Court.

**Metro Detroit**

## **Charitable giving begins at work**

### **Businesses offer prizes for donations**

*December 12, 2005*

**BY SHABINA S. KHATRI**

**FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER**

Helping people in need has its perks, as Terry Conley will tell you.

Last week, Conley won four Detroit Pistons tickets in a fund-raising raffle held by his employer, Grant Thornton, an accounting firm in Southfield. But the self-proclaimed basketball fan barely took the time to savor his prize before handing it over to coworker Doug Gizzen.

"Hopefully, he'll take me with him," Conley joked. He later explained that he had entered the contest only to donate to the United Way campaign, which received all funds raised from the raffle. The more money each employee donated, the more raffle tickets -- and chances to win -- he or she received.

Grant Thornton is just one of the many businesses across metro Detroit that have employed creative ways to get employees to dig deeper to help those in need this year. Those contributions are crucial to local charities like the United Way, which has been hit hard by donor fatigue -- a consequence of the year's rash of natural and economic disasters.

This year, more than 100 new companies have signed on to run employee campaigns and give corporate gifts to the United Way for Southeastern Michigan, said Tom Lichtle, the charity's campaign director. "Without the new businesses, we would be in significantly worse shape."

Through the help of businesses like Grant Thornton, whose raffle nearly doubled the \$6,000 its employees donated last year, the United Way has raised more than \$63 million -- only about \$1 million less than in 2004, Lichtle said.

Novel approaches like raffles and coworker competitions are good strategies for motivating employees to donate, fund-raising experts said. But adding a personal touch also works, said General Motors Corp. employee Sam Samfilippo of Brownstown Township.

"I think that people tend to give to their charity of choice, but when it comes to somebody that they know, they are always willing to help," he said.

Samfilippo's grandson, Joshua Betley of Kalamazoo, has put a human face on a new charitable initiative launched by employees in GM's North American information systems and services division, which is based in Detroit.

After 5-year-old Joshua was diagnosed with an inoperable brain tumor last year, the Make-A-Wish Foundation agreed to grant his dream of going to Disney World.

To help pay for the trip, his grandfather's coworkers set up a weekend movie showing of the "Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe" at a Madison Heights theater. A portion of each ticket sold went to the Make-A-Wish Foundation.

GM employees have raised more than \$1,500, said Make-A-Wish project manager Julie Palmer, who added that the group also is holding a raffle.

But donations from businesses aren't the only funds sustaining local charities this year.

According to Lichtle, though the total number of individuals who donate has been down recently, organizers said those who do contribute are giving more than in years past.

That makes sense to Conley, who said he has increased his charitable contributions this year because of the need for funds.

"You don't have to go far to see the need," Conley said.

Contact **SHABINA S. KHATRI** at 586-469-8087 or [skhatri@freepress.com](mailto:skhatri@freepress.com)

# Lend a hand to those in need

*Holiday Wish List*

*GENESEE COUNTY*

*THE FLINT JOURNAL FIRST EDITION* Sunday, December 11, 2005

*JOURNAL STAFF WRITER*

The Holiday Wish List is a collaborative effort among human service agencies and The Flint Journal, coordinated by the Resource Center. To use the list, donate the items requested by the deadline and report your donation to the Resource Center's Sybyl Atwood at (810) 232-3479 or [satwood@gfn.org](mailto:satwood@gfn.org).

On the Net: Resource Center, [www.rescen.org](http://www.rescen.org), [www.volhere.org](http://www.volhere.org)

Agency information

All phone numbers area code 810 unless noted.

- ADOPT-A-PET: JODY, 629-0723
- ALTERNATIVES FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES: GWEN HICKS, 235-0633
- AMERICAN RED CROSS GENESEE-LAPEER CHAPTER: SUSAN SHREVE, 257-0747
- AMERICORPS VISTA PROGRAM: ADIA, 232-5736 OR ATHENA, 232-6218
- ANIMALS REQUIRE KINDNESS (ARK): EDITH, 767-6366
- ASTHMA TASK FORCE: JAN ROBERTS, 257-9591
- ASTHMA TASK FORCE: JAN ROBERTS, 257-9591
- AVALON HOSPICE: CANDY LEITHEIM, 733-7250
- BARE ESSENTIALS, URBAN LEAGUE: JANICE GOOLEY, 789-7611 EXT. 209
- BENDLE/CARMAN-AINSWORTH LEARNING COMMUNITY: MARIE SNODGRASS, 591-3890
- BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS: ANGIE MURPHY, 235-0617
- BOYS AND GIRLS CLUB: BOB NELSON, 249-3413
- CARMAN-AINSWORTH HIGH SCHOOL: NANCY GALASSINI, 591-5509
- CATHOLIC OUTREACH: DANIELLE FRY, 234-4693
- CATHOLIC CHARITIES: KELLY FRICK, 232-9950 EXT.167
- CENTER FOR GERONTOLOGY: CRYSTAL BURNS, 762-4550
- CHRIST ENRICHMENT CENTER: DEBBIE OR AZELL, 239-9425
- CHRIST THE KING CATHOLIC CHURCH: PAT STOKES, 233-0402
- CITIZENS FOR ANIMAL RESCUE AND EMERGENCY (CARE): PHYLLIS, 239-3567  
LEAVE MESSAGE.
- CROSSOVER DOWNTOWN OUTREACH: BRENDA WOODS, 234-2479
- DISABILITY NETWORK: LINDA FRIESEN, 742-1800 EXT. 311
- DRESS FOR SUCCESS: JANICE, 233-4380
- DUKETTE SCHOOL: PEGGY, 785-4743
- FAITH ACCESS TO COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (FACED): LORI HERZOG, 232-7733
- FAMILY SERVICE AGENCY: GALE OR VIOLET, 767-4014
- FLINT FAMILY ROAD: ANITA JACKSON, 760-9333
- FLINT/GENESEE JOB CORPS: VERONA TERRY, 232-1131 EXT.113
- FLINT HEAD START: SHERONDA, 760-1139 OR JEANELLE, 760-5012
- FLINT HOUSING COMMISSION: LAKECIA POWELL, 736-3050
- GENESEE COUNTY YOUTH CORPORATION: AMBER RACKI, 233-8700
- GENESEE VALLEY INDIAN ASSOCIATION: BARBARA MITCHELL, 767-0723
- GENESYS HOSPICE: KATE MILKMAN, 636-5013



- GIRL SCOUTS FAIR WINDS COUNCIL: MARY LORAH-HAMMOND, 230-0244
- HABITAT FOR HUMANITY: NORM GOODALL, 238-1366
- HAMILTON COMMUNITY HEALTH NETWORK: ANN MARIE LESNIAK, 787-5098
- HARVEST HOUSE SHELTER: CLARISSA WIGGINS, 877-9003
- HELP ONE STUDENT TO SUCCEED (HOSTS): JEAN WHITINGER, 760-7217
- HUMANE SOCIETY: STEPHENI LAZAR, 744-0511
- INNER CITY CHRISTIAN OUTREACH: PHYLLIS OTT OR PASTOR ROTTIERS, 767-4064
- JEWISH COMMUNITY SERVICES: LYNDA YEOTIS, 767-5922
- KIDS FIGHTING CANCER-KFC FOUNDATION: GREGORY JOHNSON, 240-4618
- KING'S CLOSET: HARMONY LANGFORD, 234-2187
- LAST CHANCE RESCUE: KAREN, 653-2750
- LOVE, INC.: FRANK MURDOUGH, 235-4990
- MANLEY RAINBOW LEARNING PROGRAMS: BILLIE MCCOMB, 760-6820
- MOTHERLY INTERCESSION, INC.: ANGIE, 424-9909
- MT. MORRIS MASS TRANSPORTATION SERVICE CENTER: LEE BELL, 239-7576
- MUSEUM OF AFRIKAN ANCESTRY AND RESEARCH CENTER: KATHRYN WILLIAMS, 789-7324, MUSEUMAFRIKAN@CS.COM
- NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSE: DEBRA SMITH, 789-2961
- NEW PASSAGES: LAKESHA GLOVER, 233-0922
- NORTH END SOUP KITCHEN: JOHN MANSE, 785-6911
- OLD NEWSBOYS: LAURIE GOFF, 744-1840
- PLANNED PARENTHOOD: JENNIFER FARRINGTON, 238-3631
- PROJECT INDEPENDENCE: BRENDA SOLES OR ERIN SALZWEDEL, 744-3600, EXT. 175
- REACH: AMBER RACKI, 233-8700
- SALEM HOUSING C.D.C.: NATASHA THOMAS, 785-5340, EXT. 25, FOR GAMES AND GIFTS; DENISE YARBROUGH, 785-5340, EXT. 21, FOR WEATHERIZATION MATERIALS
- SHELTER OF FLINT: JANE O'DELL, 238-4711
- SHOES THAT FIT: JESSICA DAVIS, 760-1190
- STANDING ON SOLID GROUND: SHARON MIRSKY, 429-2526
- STATE OF MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES, GENESEE COUNTY CHILDREN'S DISTRICT: MARY SMITH, 760-2416
- THE SALVATION ARMY: CAPTAIN DIANA WILLIAMS, 789-4003
- TRAVELING MUSEUM OF AFRIKAN ANCESTRY AND RESEARCH CENTER: KATHRYN WILLIAMS, 789-7324, MUSEUMAFRIKAN@CS.COM
- URBAN LEAGUE OF FLINT BARE ESSENTIALS: JANICE GOOLEY, 789-7671 EXT. 209
- VISUALLY IMPAIRED CENTER: LEANNE FORD, 235-2544.
- WELLNESS HIV/AIDS SERVICES: ROBERT MILKS, 232-0888
- WESTWOOD HEIGHTS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL: MICHAEL BRADLEY, 591-4631
- WHALEY CHILDREN'S CENTER: TRICIA REINHARD, 234-3603
- YOUTH PROJECTS: JESSICA DAVIS, 760-1190
- YWCA SAFEHOUSE: KIM FEATHERSTON, 238-7621 EXT. 352

## **Charities in need**

*December 12, 2005*

*Detroit Free Press*

This holiday season, the Free Press will list charities' needs. If your charity wants its wish list published, send us a letter or fax including:

The charity's name and address.

The name of a contact person and a daytime phone number.

A brief description of services provided and a statement of needs.

A copy of your organization's most recent IRS Form 990 or a copy of its annual filing with the Michigan Attorney General's Charitable Trust Division.

Send requests to: Jocelyn Faniel-Heard, Gift of Giving, Detroit Free Press, 600 W. Fort, Detroit 48226. The fax number is 313-222-5981. Requests will not be accepted over the telephone.

**Michigan National Guard Adopt-a-Family Program:** Pairs Guard families with individuals or organizations who want to adopt a family experiencing financial hardship. The program is seeking individuals or organizations to donate food baskets or holiday gifts. Contact Tami Kozlowski, SE Michigan Family Assistance Center coordinator, at 734-946-0793.

**Big Brothers Big Sisters of Metropolitan Detroit:** Recruits, screens, orients and trains volunteer mentors; orients and trains parents and children; creates one-to-one matches between volunteer mentors and children, and provides guidance and support to parents, mentors and children throughout the life of the match. Wish list includes: Tickets to sporting and entertainment events, new computers, new children's toys, books, teen gifts, office supplies, gas and food cards, monetary donations and a volunteer who knows about information technology. Contact Helen Hicks, 248-569-0600, Ext. 239, or [helenk7306@hotmail.com](mailto:helenk7306@hotmail.com).

**The Lennon Center:** Offers counseling, material assistance and education to women before, during and for five years after the birth of their children. Provides parenting classes, pregnancy testing, mentoring, assistance locating employment, housing and referrals for pregnancy and parenting-related services. Wish list includes: Diapers (all sizes), T-shirts and clothing (newborn to size 4T), baby wipes, lotion, formula, blankets, cribs, car seats, grocery store/gas/drug store gift cards (\$10 amounts) and bottles. Contact Laura Dyas, 313-277-5637.

**Boys and Girls Republic:** Provides residential treatment for boys and girls ages 12-17 who are delinquent, victims of abuse/neglect and those who may have emotional problems. Also provides supervised independent living for youths ages 16-18 to prepare them for living productively in the community. Wish list includes: Board games, movie passes, yarn, new sweatshirts (all sizes), drawing paper, drawing pencils, stationery, new team baseball caps. Contact Noreen Haggerty, 248-476-9550.

**Michigan Humane Society:** Provides care for more than 45,000 animals each year at its three shelters in Detroit, Rochester Hills and Westland. Wish list includes: Digital camera (4+ megapixels), canned dog/cat food, rawhide chews, moist dog/cat treats, cat toys (nonporous), clay cat litter, stainless steel food bowls, towels, office supplies, and monetary donations. Donated items can be mailed or taken to the Detroit Shelter, 7401 Chrysler Drive, Detroit 48211. Contact Natatia Nix, 313-872-3400.

**Leaps and Bounds Family Services:** Focuses on creative and collaborative action on the health, education, social and economic needs of low-income, at-risk children and families in Wayne and Macomb counties. Wish list includes: School supplies, crayons, pens, pencils, colored paper, white printer/copier paper, readable/rewriteable CDs and/or computer diskettes, Enfamil/Similac baby formula, and monetary donations. Contact Denise Dorsz, 586-759-3895.

**Christ Child House:** Provides residential treatment for special-needs children age 5-14. Wish list includes: Board games, twin sheets, new boys clothing (sizes 8-men's large), winter coats, arts and crafts supplies and monetary donations. Contact Jill Horn, 313-584-6077, Ext. 15.

# Students serve up meals, friendships

## The needy get home-cooked food weekly

By CHRISTINE FINGER

*Record-Eagle staff writer*

*December 10, 2005*

TRAVERSE CITY - Julie McCormick's favorite part about Glad Meals is the people who enjoy the food she serves.

"We go out and sit with them and talk with them," said McCormick, a sophomore at Traverse City St. Francis High School who volunteers to prepare the weekly free meals. "You start to see the same people every week and make connections."

Glad Meals started in 2002 with just one meal each month that served about 25 local needy people. Volunteers now host meals every Saturday, and serve double that number of dinners including chicken, mashed potatoes, coffee and pie.

Teams of six helpers arrive at 9 a.m. in the school's cafeteria to start preparing food and tables, and the homemade lunch is served at noon. The meals are open to anyone in need.

The student-run effort was originally part of the school's Key Club and since has inspired more students, parents, teachers and community members to help.

Senior Becca Newman, who organized Glad Meals' launch three years ago, said the people are just as important as the food.

"We care a lot about the people that come, and I think they care a lot about us," she said. "It's grown a lot."

Students coordinate contributions like baked goods, other foods and supplies. Fundraising drives this fall at two local Catholic parishes also helped offset costs, which previously were largely covered by students and their families.

Senior Megan Hooper remembers a woman who last year brought Christmas trinkets to thank volunteers.

"You could tell she got as much joy about giving back to us and we did giving to her," she said.

Junior Hayley Avery said experiences like that one keep the volunteers coming back.

"I've been led back because I've started relationships with people," she said.

St. Francis teacher Denise Krueger oversees the Glad Meals, but said students always take the lead.

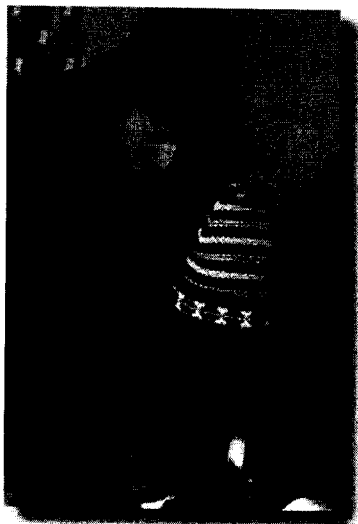
"I've really been learning about it from them," she said. "It's growing because of all of them working together, and they're going to do these things beyond high school. What a legacy to leave."

For more information about Glad Meals, volunteering or donating, call Krueger at 946-8038.

# SHOP WITH A HERO

*The Daily Telegram*  
*December 12, 2005*

Adrian police officer Leslie Keane wraps Christmas gifts Saturday morning with Shellbe McCaa, 6. Twenty-one Lenawee County youths had the opportunity to shop for Christmas presents at Meijer Saturday during the Shop With a Hero program. Each child shopped with either an Adrian police officer or an Adrian firefighter. Meijer and the Fraternal Order of Police pitched in so that each child received a \$100 gift card for Christmas shopping. Beth McCullough from Adrian Public Schools brought the group together. - Telegram photo by Lad Strayer



## Local columnists

# ROCHELLE RILEY: Children are watching you

December 11, 2005

BY ROCHELLE RILEY

FREE PRESS COLUMNIST

My assignment was to give a speech on how to improve metro Detroit's emotional health. The answer isn't simple, I said, but where we must begin should be as obvious as sunshine. It begins with our children.

Imagine what Detroit's young people must think as the city recounts votes from last month's elections, what Livonia's young people think as some watch their parents tell a new Wal-Mart not to come for fear that black people may come with it. We need to look at our children's faces when the only national news featuring Detroit is our ranking on the list of most dangerous cities, whether anyone has thrown a cup lately at a Pistons game or what talk show host Jimmy Kimmel thinks of us (as if we really cared).

Do we think Detroit kids don't care which recreation centers close because someone can't do simple math? When we finally pay attention, we may see that we are years removed from junior high, from the days when we called each other names. Then, maybe we will notice that the children are listening -- and watching.

### **Constant dismal news**

As we approach the holidays, the greatest gift we can give our children in Detroit and the dozens of communities surrounding it, is to imagine we are them. Imagine hearing every day about a shooting or an overnight fire. Imagine hearing constantly about how broke the city is or how much city and suburban residents don't get along. Imagine being battered with dismal news about the state of the city schools, stories that drown out the flowers growing among the weeds. Imagine dreaming of being someplace else, anyplace else, because you've been taught to believe the grass is greener, the sun brighter, where you don't live.

Imagine hearing about the battle brewing between fans of Hogwarts and believers in Narnia, wickedness versus Christianity. Imagine not understanding any of it because your family has neither the Harry Potter nor C.S. Lewis books. Imagine feeling angry because you want to know, hate feeling left out. Imagine being fans of Harry Potter and Narnia, but because you live in Detroit, no one believes you're interested. No one engages you or invites you to special movie screenings.

### **Point way to the future**

My speech that day was simpler than I could have imagined. The way to save metro Detroit is to show our children how to better embrace their futures. People reinvent themselves all the time, start second careers, second marriages, second families. If people do it, then why should Detroit base its future on its past?

Detroit must do what I encourage young people to do, not to search for jobs, but to create jobs, not to find a way to make the old work, but to find the new. We must teach our children to grow up wanting to be more than the people who recount election votes. We must teach them that violence should not be accepted as the norm. We must teach them to grow up to make speeches, give to charity, save lives.

And we must begin by understanding that they are watching us now.

**ROCHELLE RILEY's** columns are published on the Sunday Voices page and on Wednesdays and Fridays on the Other Voices page. Contact her at 313-223-4473 or [riley@freepress.com](mailto:riley@freepress.com).

# Volunteers needed for annual food drive

*Sunday, December 11, 2005*  
*se@kalamazoogazette.com 388-8554*

Volunteers are needed for an annual holiday food drive started 13 years ago by the Black Police Officers Association of Kalamazoo County.

Help is needed at 6 p.m. Friday for sorting and counting food and at 9 a.m. Saturday for packing and delivery, said Detective Harold West of the Kalamazoo Department of Public Safety. The work will be done at the Hazel Gray Building on the Kalamazoo County Fairgrounds, 2900 Lake St. in Kalamazoo.

"We need those volunteers," West said. "There's no way we can pull that off." He said there are any number of jobs people can do, from breaking down boxes as they are emptied to simply socializing with other volunteers.

Organizers are collecting enough food for a week for more than 1,400 families. Each year, the number of volunteers seems to increase, with about 1,000 helping out last year, West said.

People can still donate food by dropping it off at any of the fire departments within Kalamazoo County, he said.

For more information, contact Hugh Hoyle at 349-8023, Anne Triemstra at 385-2361 or West at 337-8169.

# Officers help kids buy gifts

*Sunday, December 11, 2005*

*lgray@kalamazoogazette.com 388-2738*

Officer Len Borgman, of the Otsego police department, patiently handed out stick-on police badges to each of the 10 eager children who stood before him Saturday.

"If you want to be good shoppers, you have got to be official," Borgman said.

Borgman was preparing his young shoppers to search the aisles of the Otsego Wal-Mart for Christmas presents for their family members as part of the local Shop With a Cop program.

The program, which is one of many around the country, organizes police officers and firefighters to help needy children pick out presents for the holidays with donated gift cards. The Otsego program has been taking place on and off for the past five years.

More than 140 pupils in kindergarten through sixth grade were selected for the program through the Otsego and Plainwell schools and gathered at the Wal-Mart early Saturday morning.

Each child received a \$25 gift card, thanks to a \$1,000 donation from Pepsi and a \$2,500 donation from Wal-Mart, said Debby Haas, of the services department at Wal-Mart.

"It's going to be crazy, but that's the whole fun of the Christmas spirit," Haas said. "It's great to give back to the community and help the children enjoy this time of year."

Ten-year-old Clay Clark, brother Christian Clark, 8, and cousin Shelby Cox, 11, really enjoyed their chance to go shopping with a police officer.

"He showed us all his police stuff and let us wander around the toy aisles and helped us with the math," Cox said. "It's a fun way to give back to my family, because they do a lot for me."

One Otsego police officer, five Otsego firefighters and two officers from Plainwell volunteered their time.

"I enjoy the contact with the kids," said Plainwell police officer Dave Kuitert. "When you help someone, the blessings you get back are so much greater than what you give."

The program also helped to strengthen the relationship between children and the officers.

"The kids found out we're not bad guys," Kuitert said. "A lot of kids are stand-offish with police, but when they have one-on-one contact with the officers, they see we are just like everyone else."

This was the first year Officer Len Borgman participated in the program, and he enjoyed it very much.

"This is a good way to be involved," Borgman said. "I like to see the kids' faces light up. If I'm invited next year, I'll definitely be back."

After shopping, volunteers were on hand to wrap each and every one of the presents the kids had purchased. Free holiday cookies, punch and hot chocolate were also available for the families to enjoy.

Six-year-old Emily Fall patiently explored the shelves in the arts-and-crafts section looking for the perfect present for her older sister.

"I'm not sure how she got picked for this," said Emily's mother, Lisa Fall, of Alamo. "But I'm sure thankful that she did."



# Kids get fired up

*Monday, December 12, 2005*

*JESSICA SOULE*

*THE SAGINAW NEWS*

Hundreds of children will find presents under their trees this Christmas, thanks to families who donated toys through the Saginaw Township Fire Department.

As a reward for their good deeds, firefighters let the 200 families cruise the streets in five of their fire trucks Saturday.

The Shattuck and McCarty fire stations collected more than 250 toys for the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve's Toys for Tots effort, which provides gifts for needy children in the community.

Firefighters drove up to four residents at a time around a one-mile loop, with a stop to show off the rigs' sirens and horns.

Steve R. Flores said his daughter Adriana, 3, looked forward to riding on a fire engine but became intimidated by the huge vehicles.

"At first the noise kind of scared her, but when she realized she could tell her friends that she rode in a fire truck," she got excited, said Adriana's mother, Laura Flores of Saginaw Township. Next year, department officials plan to expand the event to all three township stations because of this year's success, said Chris J. Schneider.

River M. and Dakota R. Marshall asked plenty of questions during their 5-minute ride. The 10-year-old twins are the sons of Pat D. and Karen M. Marshall of Saginaw Township.

"They talked to the fireman, asked a lot of questions like why did he become a fireman, what's this for ... They're not shy at all," said Pat Marshall.

While a chance to ride in an unusual set of wheels acted as incentive for residents to contribute, most people would have given to the Marine's charity anyway, said Mark A. Laux, public safety educator for Station 1 on Shattuck.

Patrick T. and Katie R. Kennelly of Hemlock took their 3-year-old son, Michael, to the Fire Department to teach him to share with and help others.

The firefighters get something from the event, too.

Many volunteers join the department to "help people in times of need, be it a fire or people struggling during the holidays," said Lt. Brian G. Pike of Station 1.

Pike said he loves to see children smile.

"It's the reason we do these community events," he said. "Everybody, from the time they're kids, wants to be firefighters. Some people, like me, never grow out of it."

People came from as far away as Linden to participate in the unusual benefit, said Firefighter Jeramie W. Morris.

Morris, of Station 2 on McCarty, is one of 25 department volunteers who helped with the event.

# Kids get police escort for shopping

*Monday, December 12, 2005*

*By Kathy Bush*

*The Grand Rapids Press*

Tyler Dewitt-Devries showed the dragon egg he wanted to buy to Kent County Sheriff's Sgt. Mike Breen.

"The egg comes apart, and there's a dragon you can put together," said Tyler, 9, a fourth-grader at Comstock Park's Pine Island Elementary School. "Then, if you want it to be in the egg, you take the dinosaur apart and put the egg back together."

Tyler bought clothes for himself, as well as gifts for family members.

He was one of 40 youngsters ages 3 to 13 who got up early to "Shop With a Sheriff" on Sunday morning at the Wal-Mart store on Alpine Avenue NW in Alpine Township.

Another group of children did the same at the Wal-Mart on 28th Street SE in Cascade Township.

This is the third year Kent County sheriff's deputies spent their day off shopping with children whose families were identified by schools and social service organizations as needing help buying Christmas gifts.

The children are paired with deputies, and each gets \$100 to spend.

Deputies drove the youngsters to the shopping spree in police cars with sirens wailing and lights flashing.

"This is a pretty good the sheriff's (department)is doing," said Michael VanZyl, of Comstock Park, as he and his wife, Mandy, waited for their three children, ages 5 to 9, to come into the store.

In two weeks, VanZyl will be laid from his job as a buffer at Behr Inc. in Plainfield Township.

His wife recently started a job at McDonald's on Alpine Avenue to bring in some income. There just is not money for Christmas this year, the couple said.

"This will help us," Michael VanZyl said. "We need to catch up."

The children have a list of things they need, such as winter gear, and then get to shop for what they want.

"I got to do the siren on the police car," said Hannah Smith, 6, a first-grader at Northview's East Oakview Elementary School.

She had a hard time choosing a winter coat because, "I like every color."

Hannah settled on a shiny blue coat with fur around the hood to keep her warm this winter, then went off to find matching gloves.

Robert Gates was looking forward to wearing his new clothes to school today.

"I'm going to wear this," said Robert, 12, pulling a T-shirt with a car on the front out of his shopping cart.

"I saw a 1956 Chevy on TV this morning that looks exactly like this car," said Robert, 12, a sixth- grader at Kenowa Hills Intermediate School.

Shop With a Sheriff is funded through the Kent County Deputy Sheriff's Association, Volunteer Traffic Squad and Road Patrol Union and donations from area businesses.

# Moving forward

By: Michelle Swartz story updated December 10, 2005 11:26PM  
Monroe News.com

A Hurricane Katrina evacuee reflects on her experiences in Monroe.

Sherry Neal had never been to Michigan, let alone to Monroe.

But thanks to the rising flood waters and relentless winds that nearly destroyed her apartment, Monroe has been her home for the past three months.

She is a survivor of Hurricane Katrina, the Category 4 storm that ravaged her hometown of New Orleans in late August.

Today, however, Ms. Neal is returning home. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is cutting the money that allowed her to live in a local motel.

Ms. Neal, who arrived early in September with only a bag of clothes and her cat, has been helped by area individuals and agencies.

"The people and organizations in Monroe have been great. Through word of mouth, they heard I was here. They have given me everything you see in here," she said, pointing to the clothes, food and daily necessities in her room at Hometown Inn.

"Everyone has been so kind. I can't thank them enough."

Ms. Neal was pleased with Lake Erie Transit, her only source of transportation.

"Everyone at Lake Erie Transit, including the bus drivers, were wonderful. I was treated beautifully," she said. "I have nothing bad to say about them."

She admits, however, that she didn't particularly enjoy one aspect of Michigan.

"I can't handle this cold weather," she said, smiling. "It's too cold for me."

Despite the weather, Ms. Neal enjoyed living in Monroe. She especially appreciates the people she has met, including doctors, staff at Red Cross and Michigan Works! and individuals who helped her along the way.

"So many people have been absolutely wonderful to me. I can't say enough good things about everyone," she said. "The one thing I gained in this experience is a lot of angels."

# Bench warrants issued for nonpayment of child support

Ingham and Eaton counties' Friend of the Court offices issued nearly 249 bench warrants in November against parents who are behind in child-support payments. Those parents are shown in the following list, part of the State Journal's commitment to publish names of deadbeat parents on the second Sunday of every month, based on warrants issued the previous month. These warrants were active in both counties as of Nov. 30. Some parents may have paid some or all of their debt since then. Some names appear more than once because they have more than one support order. The Clinton County Friend of the Court has refused to cooperate with the State Journal's request for names, saying that publishing such a list would embarrass the children of the parents named.

Name	Age	Address	Amount of arrears
<b>Ingham County</b>			
<b>AI</b>			
Alford, Ronald D.	50	Lansing	\$59,556.93
Alcoa, Michael Alan	36	Lansing	\$6,638.87
Allen, Charles D.	26	Holt	\$7,750.93
Allen, Charles D.	26	Holt	\$16,773.80
Aluqiah, Kasib Hamman	31	Lansing	\$11,126.28
Barnbach, Carl David	34	Jackson	\$31,894.65
Barnett, Leland Delaney	32	Lansing	\$1,944.63
Barnett, Leland Delaney	32	Lansing	\$1,496.25
Barnett, Leland Delaney	32	Lansing	\$19,933.36
Belia, James C.	45	Lansing	\$5,092.76
Benson, Kevin Scott	38	Lansing	\$34,781.63
Bonawit, Daniel James	46	Haslett	\$7,286.45
Bransford, Vernon Demond	30	Lansing	\$34,759.55
Briggs, Brian Charles	31	Mason	\$24,765.90
Briggs, Quincy Lamont	33	Lansing	\$4,305.41
Brokenshire, Michael Vincent	46	Holt	\$14,114.59
Brown, Darryl Edward	29	Lansing	\$1,034.12
Brown, Darryl Edward	29	Lansing	\$19,627.79
Brown, Darryl Edward	29	Lansing	\$17,143.44
Brown, Gerald Keith	25	Eaton Rapids	\$6,152.28
Brown, Gerald K.	25	Lansing	\$12,892.34
Brown, Lashon D.	29	Lansing	\$8,491.70
Brown, Samuel Darren	35	Lansing	\$41,915.28
Brown, Samuel Darren	35	Lansing	\$12,855.36
Brown, Samuel Darren	35	Lansing	\$45,715.50
Bryant, Andre Demetrius	33	Quincy, Fla.	\$7,664.37
Burke, Jonathan Keith	40	Lansing	\$6,039.39
Bush, Frank	68	Lansing	\$7,096.22
Cantwell, Robert L.	43	East Lansing	\$41,784.31
Cavender, Jason Robert	28	Stockbridge	\$7,593.17
Chandler, Nicole Marie	35	Lansing	\$5,593.96
Christian, James	39	Lansing	\$13,797.95
Christian, James	39	Lansing	\$16,401.95
Clay, Bruce Alex Sr.	37	Lansing	\$36,232.18
Coats, Raymond Todd	41	Lansing	\$10,641.79
Cobb, Kevin Eugene	31	Lansing	\$2,973.48
Coleman, Markeys	38	Lansing	\$23,654.90
Coleman, Markeys	38	Lansing	\$54,034.37
Coleman, Markeys	38	Lansing	\$27,693.63
Coleman, Markeys	38	Lansing	\$35,590.16
Cooper, Eric Marcell	35	Flint	\$1,416.54
Craig, Michael James	23	Battle Creek	\$14,435.98
Curbelo, Felix Oscar	41	Hialeah, Fla.	\$2,493.53
Curbelo, Felix Oscar	41	Hialeah, Fla.	\$8,526.62
Dabney, Ricardo Andre	49	Lansing	\$71,489.04
Davenport, Marcus Omar	28	Jackson	\$32,320.31
Davis, Victor Ellis	49	Lansing	\$1,965.24
Dessiro, Sony	27	Lansing	\$1,999.45
Dexter, Daniel James	33	Lansing	\$1,284.24
Dixon, Gregory Timothy	44	Oscoda	\$11,211.11
Erskin, Bernard Anthony	37	Lansing	\$8,585.13
Farmer, Patricia Ann	41	Lansing	\$7,926.23
Faust, Charles Edward	24	Bath	\$8,131.37
Faust, Charles Edward	24	Bath	\$7,773.49
Ferrier, George	60	Ann Arbor	\$1,098.02
Fletcher, Joshua	29	Stockbridge	\$33,264.00
Flowers, Yreke Alfred	48	Lansing	\$16,499.73
Follick, Jeffrey Lee	33	Leslie	\$2,191.86
Ford, Gerald Dwayne	31	Lansing	\$4,853.40
Fry, Mark Joseph	38	Lansing	\$5,206.49
Garcia-Zimmiti, Giancarlo	26	West Hartford, Conn.	\$1,205.00
Gephart, Shaun Henry	29	Lansing	\$478.42

Name	Age	Address	Amount of arrears
Geovold, Jesse Allen	22	East Lansing	\$9,266.57
Glynn, Wayne M.	24	Lansing	\$8,970.15
Gollach, Barbara A.	34	Jackson	\$1,571.81
Gonzales, Joseph R.	24	Kalamazoo	\$12,013.23
Graddick, Alan Thomas	52	West Bloomfield	\$1,145.30
Hackworth, Joe	53	Jackson	\$12,430.81
Haehnel, Rick Douglas	36	Fort Meyers, Fla.	\$6,463.43
Hall, Dewayne D.	23	Lansing	\$19,383.49
Hayes, Dawn Marie	30	Jackson	\$2,322.26
Head, Rudolph Jr.	43	Lansing	\$2,822.42
Henderson, Lajack Jermaine	23	Lansing	\$2,117.92
Henderson, Lajack Jermaine	23	Lansing	\$1,672.69
Herbert, Robert John	28	Lansing	\$23,090.33
Herman, Adam Arthur	34	Eaton Rapids	\$2,561.59
Hernandez, Felix	32	Portland	\$913.50
Herrera, Felipe T.	27	Lansing	\$18,858.37
Herritt, Benjamin E.	32	Lansing	\$25,591.92
Hicks, Anthony	37	Lansing	\$37,862.28
Hollide, Beverly	41	Toledo, Ohio	\$890.95
Holm, Michael J.	33	DeWitt	\$14,759.92
Hooper, Lovevill	30	Saginaw	\$13,486.82
Horne, Corey	32	Holt	\$11,874.93
Horne, Philip James	33	Lansing	\$41,194.84
Jackson, Charles R.	35	Lansing	\$4,161.14
Jackson, Charles R.	35	Lansing	\$42,457.98
Jackson, Neil E.	27	Lansing	\$13,418.46
Jesse, William Ray	36	Stanton	\$24,348.93
Johnson, Daryl Quinn II	27	Lansing	\$10,411.14
Johnson, Keven Eugene	34	Lansing	\$21,926.92
Jones, Terry Earl	41	Lansing	\$10,241.36
Jones, Terry Earl	41	Lansing	\$13,199.80
Kilgore, Robert Nathan	48	Southfield	\$108,977.07
Kinne, Ronald C.	38	Howell	\$7,227.62
Kinne, Ronald C.	38	Howell	\$88,196.82
Kirby, David Joseph	44	Lansing	\$2,674.88
Kopitsch, Richard Edward	42	Williamston	\$2,034.14
Kosloski, Kurt Howard	42	E. Rockland Key, Fla.	\$29,744.59
Layne, Adam W.	42	Leslie	\$5,840.05
Lemon, Averill Jerree	26	Lansing	\$7,090.59
Lemon, Averill Jerree	26	Lansing	\$6,190.03
Leonard, Jacob Ryan	22	Grand Ledge	\$2,061.61
Lewis, Charlie	37	Appleton, Wisc.	\$618.59
Lino, Lydia M.	24	Lansing	\$4,293.08
Lovel, Jack Ray	20	Lansing	\$2,785.04
Lowe, Steven Christopher	48	Jacksonville, Fla.	\$11,126.65
Lumley, Leonard M.	57	Lansing	\$4,159.21
Lumley, Leonard M.	57	Lansing	\$2,228.35
Lynn, Marcus Eugene	28	Chicago, Ill.	\$25,374.25
Marsh, Nicholas Lynn	30	Palatine, Ill.	\$2,711.55
Marth, Larry Dean	53	Traverse City	\$10,562.24
Mathews, William Joe Jr.	23	Lansing	\$1,606.61
Maxwell, Steven Donnell	33	Detroit	\$1,796.00
McAbee, Charles Jr.	40	Lansing	\$41,980.45
McBride, Donald James	40	Dansville	\$1,151.14
McCray, Brian Webster	44	Lansing	\$91,191.08
McCue, William Lion	30	Logansville, Ga.	\$7,686.87
McDaniel, Morris	28	Lansing	\$15,442.51
McGowan, Scott Clyde	34	Lansing	\$6,726.29
McKee, Joshua Orion	26	Lansingburg	\$3,347.85
McKee, Pedro	35	Lansing	\$2,802.68
Mendicino, James Christopher	39	Lansing	\$8,546.70
Miller, Frederick E. Jr.	38	Waterford	\$9,231.59
Miller, James Junior II	31	Lansing	\$4,428.73
Miller, Michael Donell	38	Lansing	\$18,590.52

Name	Age	Address	Amount of arrears
Walker, Nicole Marie	31	Lansing	\$14,167.52
Walkinwood, Scott Dale	31	Pittsford	\$14,252.99
Walls, Robert Edward	26	Lansing	\$13,264.10
Walls, Warren James	32	Lansing	\$6,664.28
Walitz, David Allen	56	Higgins Lake	\$13,028.72
Wardlaw, Shontate Dion	28	Detroit	\$6,213.01
Wardlaw, Shontate Dion	28	Detroit	\$17,136.78
Warner, Charles Raymond	41	Dansville	\$1,502.60
Warren, Todd Janaine	35	Denver, Colo.	\$1,950.36
Watkins, Christopher Lee	29	Bay City	\$6,443.33
Watson, Wayne	28	Lansing	\$1,572.69
Wauqui, Jason Bryant	35	Owosso	\$27,202.21
Woods, Frank	41	Flint	\$2,365.70
Woods, William Laphel	43	Portland	\$2,248.93
Woods, William Laphel	43	Portland	\$14,460.36
Walker, William Eugene	36	Lansing	\$16,392.19
Wright, Trevis Lecari	34	Farmington	\$26,611.99
Young, Brett	49	Olivet	\$6,084.48
<b>Eaton County</b>			
Adams, Brandon	25	Lansing	\$28,423.74
Ardis, Domonique	22	Lansing	\$3,436.11
Armstrong, Douglas E.	31	Lansing	\$3,365.40
Babb, Perry D.	45	Lansing	\$54,901.06
Blissett, Dale	37	Williamston	\$6,450.62
Brown, Ronnie G. Jr.	21	Battle Creek	\$28,640.98
Brock, Robert	42	Lansing	\$33,957.91
Cochran, Anthony T.	40	Lansing	\$1,304.00
Couzens, Todd L.	38	Lansing	\$5,718.81
Craft, Jack C.	46	Olivet	\$2,919.74
Dawson, Timothy L.	30	Bellevue	\$1,914.08
Demick, Casey J.	35	Rochester	\$16,489.17
Dowell, Nelson	47	Charlottesville	\$18,886.49
French, Richard A.	44	Grand Rapids	\$346.24
French, Richard A.	44	Grand Rapids	\$10,835.76
Fox, Reginald	38	Muskegon	\$6,681.45
Griffin, Christopher S.	41	Lansing	\$4,919.93
Horvath, Ryan J.	22	Grand Ledge	\$418.43
Jackson, Christopher	34	Lansing	\$3,266.57
Jackson, Ivan A.	46	Lansing	\$20,009.54
Knickelbocker, Michael W.	33	Eaton Rapids	\$335.02
Mataya, David	52	Moscow	\$46,518.82
Matons, Ian G.	30	Eaton Rapids	\$5,057.25
Matons, Ian G.	30	Eaton Rapids	\$8,724.92
McClanahan, Nathaniel	25	Lansing	\$7,389.54
Moon, Daniel L. Jr.	30	Bellevue	\$73,783.83
Nelson, Erik A.	26	White Cloud	\$324.70
Ryquist, Todd E.	33	Lansing	\$3,645.54
Orville, Charles V.	24	Eaton Rapids	\$816.21
Picklesimer, Stacy	38	Lansing	\$5,509.20
Roux, Jodie K.	44	Lansing	\$2,409.02
Scott, Kenneth	30	Lansing	\$1,885.95
Scott, Ronald	40	Charlottesville	\$91.72
Scott, Ronald	40	Charlottesville	\$1,627.17
Swafford, Shannon D.	29	Lakeland, Fla.	\$4,322.47
Thomas, Laura	45	Lansing	\$18,257.63
Vergosen, Jeremy L.	35	Grand Ledge	\$15,646.26
Waters, Kimberly	28	Lansing	\$7,023.17
Westphall, Crystal R. Tolan	25	Escambia	\$5,915.29
Wilkinson, Mikal J.	34	Lansing	\$12,018.12
Wood, Matthew J.	27	Jackson	\$23,615.48

Name	Age	Address	Amount of arrears
Minicciotti, Christopher	33	Kennewick, Wash.	\$6,018.33
Minicciotti, Christopher	33	Kennewick, Wash.	\$51,039.18
Mitts, Ahmad	27	Lansing	\$23,109.53
Mitts, Ahmad	27	Lansing	\$2,740.23
Mitts, Ahmad	27	Lansing	\$5,176.26
Mison, Bruce Kenneth	30	College Park, Ga.	\$28,233.63
Mohamed, Ibrahim	47	East Lansing	\$2,334.72
Moore, Charles Stephen	29	Lansing	\$5,691.94
Moore, Cordell Dion	31	Lansing	\$19,485.70
Morales, Manuel	34	Saginaw	\$56,862.25
Morgan, Lindsey	39	Louisville, Ky.	\$4,856.03
Moshier, Lee Ray	33	Lansing	\$31,395.50
Muxel, Carlos	33	Lansing	\$19,188.01
Oliver, Robert J.	30	Saginaw	\$1,599.78
O'Malley, Patrick	21	East Lansing	\$1,520.43
Paige, Armando Maurice	35	Detroit	\$46,359.08
Patrick, Billy	38	Hanover	\$8,216.15
Patton, Charles James	32	Toledo, Ohio	\$6,157.92
Pendergrass, Shaun Michael	23	Haslett	\$2,324.65
Pennoni, Joseph Frank Jr.	25	Mason	\$7,192.99
Pike, Derrick Keith	23	Lansing	\$1,526.15
Pollack, Arntwan Iadar	30	Decatur, Ga.	\$9,171.15
Revilla, Juan Rudolph	39	Lansing	\$1,928.51
Revilla, Juan Rudolph	39	Lansing	\$20,177.47
Richmond, Jamel Vernon	32	Lansing	\$3,648.78
Ridley, Anthony Jerome	44	Lansing	\$4,662.80
Rivera, Salvador Quesada	34	Lansing	\$3,723.30
Rivers, Salvador Quesada	34	Lansing	\$14,138.63
Robinson, Delray Marc	31	Lansing	\$16,636.15
Rock, Ashlea Marcelle	23	San Antonio, Texas	\$1,921.63
Rogers, Joel E.	31	Perry	\$9,979.34
Romanekewitz, Jason Michael	22	Lansing	\$260.06
Rouser, Douglas Kenneth	43	Eaton Rapids	\$12,080.65
Royce, Cathryn	42	Cape Coral, Fla.	\$5,586.33
Rugg, James Arthur	24	Shallsburg	\$650.72
Schwen, Linda A.	59	Lansing	\$1,888.69
Scott, Ronald Edward	59	Toledo, Ohio	\$10,001.19
Seavage, Larry Eugene	36	Jackson	\$17,010.31
Smith, Jeffery Darnell	35	Lansing	\$7,647.76
Snow, Paul Kurt	37	Lansing	\$6,747.80
Snow, Paul Kurt	37	Lansing	\$6,389.85
Spaeth, Timothy David	37	Grand Ledge	\$581.79
Stott, Dana Richard	23	Lansing	\$2,876.69
Stott, Dana Richard	23	Lansing	\$6,967.03
Stout, Joe Ray	32	Jopka, Ill.	\$4,605.82
Streeter, Brian	46	Eaton Rapids	\$46,222.39
Tanner, Horace L.	39	Lansing	\$3,657.10
Tate, Shawn D.	34	Detroit	\$1,650.87
Taylor, Charles	25	Coldwater	\$7,030.84
Taylor, Kristina (Stauffer)	32	East Lansing	\$15,630.09
Taylor, Shelby Glenn	47	Lansing	\$1,848.38
Thomas, Robert Joseph	41	Grand Rapids	\$51,667.87
Torreblanca, Juan Pablo	41	Grand Rapids	\$14,227.26
Townsend, Maurice	31	Lansing	\$953.31
Trevino, Daniel Anthony	27	Lansing	\$15,471.23
Trofater, Kathy Ann	49	Lansing	\$3,973.14
Tucker, Gregory Lee	48	Muskegon	\$11,673.15
Tucker, Gregory Lee	48	Muskegon	\$23,697.99
Tucker, Gregory Lee	48	Muskegon	\$13,580.72
Turner, Jerome Stephen	24	Flint	\$7,980.30
VanDousser, George T.	33	Mason	\$2,822.60
VanDousser, George T.	33	Mason	\$953.31
Walker, Danell Maurice	25	Lansing	\$583.23
Walker, DeShawn Tramayne	21	Lansing	\$7,802.80

# Officials will monitor daycare

*Saturday, December 10, 2005*

*The Grand Rapids Press*

ALPINE TOWNSHIP -- State officials will conduct unannounced inspections of a daycare center following an investigation that confirmed a man accused of sexually abusing children had been allowed to visit the center.

Kristopher Cross, 33, is charged with assaulting three girls, ages 5 through 7, at another daycare he operated on Grand Rapids' Northeast Side. Four months ago, Cross and his wife, Amanda, bought the Family and Friends Day Care, at 3999 Alpenhorn Drive NW, although the state license remained in the name of the previous owner, Martha Kadolph, of Tallmadge Township.

In a report released Friday, the state Department of Human Services said Kadolph improperly had allowed Cross -- who is not named in the report -- to enter the center twice after she was told he should be kept out. Kadolph also was ordered to bar Amanda Cross from the center, although her name does not appear in the report.

Kadolph's license was placed on a six-month provisional status, and she was given 15 days to explain how she will comply with all state rules.

# Michigan, other states decry federal cuts

*Monday, December 12, 2005*

*By Sarah Kellogg*

*Washington Bureau/MLIVE*

WASHINGTON -- Michigan could lose as much as \$1 billion in federal assistance over the next five years if Congress approves legislation this week reducing funding increases for Medicaid, food stamps and child support.

Slowing the growth in federal funding to the states would be disastrous, Michigan officials say, noting that the state's sluggish economy has made safety-net programs essential to struggling working families.

"From our perspective, the cuts contemplated in Washington are unacceptable," said Liz Boyd, a spokeswoman for Gov. Jennifer Granholm. "They would have a Draconian impact on our programs."

With the holidays just weeks away, members of Congress are pushing the reductions as part of their massive budget reconciliation bill -- an omnibus bill that lays out spending and policy priorities for the next five years.

Republican lawmakers defend the reductions in social programs, arguing that the proposed budget trimming is merely a decrease in proposed spending increases.

"We're not cutting these programs at all," said Rep. Dave Camp, R-Midland. "I think we have an obligation to the taxpayers to make sure we have a very strong safety net and that it doesn't grow at a rate that isn't sustainable."

Camp said Medicaid alone will grow at 7.5 percent instead of 7.7 percent over the course of the budget, while the overall growth in federal spending will continue at 6.3 percent instead of 6.4 percent.

The House version of the reconciliation bill would reduce federal funding by \$50 billion over the next five years. The Senate bill would shrink funding by \$35 billion. A joint conference committee has been charged with working out the differences and will continue those negotiations this week.

Concerns about the drop in federal revenues prompted Granholm to temporarily withdraw her support for \$500 million in business tax breaks pending in the state Legislature. The governor said the state could not weather a hit of \$1 billion in federal aid and reduce tax revenues at the same time.

Anti-poverty groups suggest the onslaught on human service programs is part of the GOP Congress' effort to generate enough money to offset legislation that would extend federal tax reductions for another five years at a cost of about \$56 billion.

"As a result of the severe underfunding of resources, it's likely that states would have to divert money away from low-income families," said Sharon Parrott of the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, a liberal think tank in Washington.

In the area of child support enforcement, state officials estimate that changes in the federal matching rate for administering the program -- gradually reducing it from 66 percent in 2006 to 50 percent in 2010 -- would cost Michigan \$61 million annually beginning in fiscal year 2007.

"The cuts in federal funding for child support collection would put even more children at risk of living in poverty," said Jackie Doig, a spokeswoman for the Center for Civil Justice, a Saginaw-based anti-poverty group, "and strain the state budget even further when child support is not available to reimburse the state for assistance provided to low-income children."

Michigan's food stamp program would take a \$6 million annual hit over five years under the bill, as Congress changes the eligibility rules for the program, basically targeting the aid at individuals who are on welfare. The state estimates that about 26,000 low-income families that don't qualify for welfare would be forced to leave the program.

The biggest hit, Michigan officials say, would come in Medicaid, where the state could lose as much as \$420 million over the next five years if the House succeeds in eliminating the managed care provider assessment. The state uses the assessment on health maintenance organizations to help offset its Medicaid costs. In addition, Michigan would lose between \$50 million and \$100 million annually if Congress adopts a plan to reduce federal support for targeted case management activities in the states.

U.S. Rep. Mike Rogers, R-Brighton, says the proposals regarding Medicaid, while trimming the budget, would also give states more freedom to administer the program by requiring co-payments for services.

"The governors came to us and asked for our help," said Rogers. "We've given them what they asked for -- more freedom to administer their own programs."

Rogers said an example of that is the cost-sharing provisions allowing states to increase co-payments by tying them to the medical inflation rate for Medicaid recipients. It also gives them the authority to deny care if co-payments aren't paid.

But the National Governors Association last week released a letter sent to Congress saying that the changes would be detrimental to states and their citizens.

"Our opposition to provisions that merely shift costs to states cannot be overstated," the letter said.



# Phony Story Planted to Boost Donations

*Dec. 10, 2005, 12:58AM*

*By PAM EASTON*

*Associated Press Writer © 2005 The Associated Press*

HOUSTON — It was a heart-wrenching story: A 10-year-old boy named John, separated from his mother since the hurricane, was living with other foster children in an emergency shelter, and he had one Christmas wish \_ to go home.

"But there's no way I'll get gifts for Christmas. I don't even believe in Santa anymore," he was quoted as saying.

The Brazosport Facts ran the profile on its front page Nov. 29 as part of its Fill-a-Stocking series, which features a different foster child each day from Thanksgiving through Christmas and solicits donations for a local charity to help fulfill the child's holiday wish.

But the story was a work of fiction.

State caseworkers apparently made it up to tug at readers' heartstrings.

Dan Lauck, a reporter with KHOU-TV in Houston, discovered the story was phony after calling state officials to request an interview with the child. He believed that if the boy's story was told on television, the youngster might find his mother.

Lauck said his requests were repeatedly denied because of what he was told were privacy concerns. Eventually he was told that the boy was living with relatives. Finally, an agency spokesman told him the profile had been made up.

Caseworkers with state Child Protective Services in Brazoria County, outside Houston, were responsible for writing the profiles for the newspaper's charity drive, which has been a holiday fixture in the 19,000-circulation paper since 1982.

CPS has apologized to the paper, which immediately suspended its series and returned the \$1,070 collected so far this year from donors.

Bill Cornwell, publisher of The Facts, said the newspaper trusted the agency to present accurate stories, and believed only minor changes \_ such as names and ages \_ were made to protect the children's privacy. Given privacy issues related to foster children, Cornwell said there was only so much verification the newspaper could do.

CPS is investigating how it happened, spokesman Patrick Crimmins said.

Lauck said it does not appear the CPS caseworkers had any bad intentions.

"They were just trying to tell stories that would clearly tug at the heart, capture the emotions of the readers and inspire them to give more money," the TV reporter said. "But they did it in a way that misled the public."

Bob Steele, a former TV news director who teaches ethics at the Poynter Institute, a school for journalists, said the problem could have been averted if the profiles had been done by reporters rather than caseworkers.

"The integrity of the paper is damaged, the good cause that was intended is eroded and those in need are then not served as they should be," Steele said.

Cornwell said his newspaper is now trying to determine whether previous stories were falsified, too. He said he does not understand why a caseworker would resort to fiction, since foster children's real stories are compelling enough.

Meanwhile, he said some readers are frustrated with the newspaper for canceling the series and think The Facts abandoned the children.

"We are not going to walk away from the kids' needs monetarily," Cornwell said. But he said: "We are out to get to the bottom of the situation so people can trust what they read."

# State needs jobs, Governor, so sign tax cut legislation

*Web-posted Dec 11, 2005*

**EDITORIALS**

*The Oakland Press*

You have to admit, the business tax cuts saga in Lansing does have drama. It would be extremely entertaining if it were not so serious.

In the latest episode, both the state Senate and House overwhelmingly passed business tax cuts to preserve Michigan jobs at Delphi and Visteon and also to help make Michigan competitive enough to attract new jobs to replace those that are leaving.

Democratic Gov. Jennifer Granholm, who found a loophole in the last business tax cut and vetoed the plan, ordered the GOP-led Legislature to try again. The Republican leadership quickly resurrected the tax cuts in a new package and managed to drum up bipartisan support to get it passed overwhelmingly in both houses.

On Tuesday, the governor indicated she would sign it. On Wednesday, she said that if the federal government enacts its threatened billion dollars worth of cuts to the state's Medicaid and welfare allotments, then she could not sign a business tax cut that would cost the state revenue.

That sounds reasonable, but it raises other questions.

1. If the feds do cut \$250 million a year, for four years, from our Medicaid and welfare payments, that would be serious. But the state's unemployment problem is just as menacing. How would it solve either problem to do nothing about Michigan's high business taxes and thereby continue to drive out current jobs and cripple efforts to attract new ones? Without jobs, how is the state going to dig itself out of an even bigger hole than it is in now?

2. How much effect would such a threat of not cutting state business taxes carry in Washington? Few politicians in our nation's Capitol seem terribly concerned that Michigan's economy is in the tank or that the state is heavily reliant on the domestic auto industry, which is also in the tank. Our sorry state of affairs did not win us any favors in the recent highway bill, in which we retained our longstanding donor status regarding highway tax dollars. The current highway bill leaves Michigan in the curious position of sending tax dollars to assist states with better economies and lower business taxes < two advantages that assist them in taking jobs away from us.

A refusal by Granholm to sign the business tax cut bills would make about as much sense putting a hold on the \$1 billion the state has borrowed from our tobacco settlement - money earmarked to recruit new high-tech jobs. Why not spend that billion to cover the potential billion in lost federal aid?

Same reason: Michigan can't afford not to create new jobs.

# House and Senate Still Far Apart on Medicaid Changes

By **ROBERT PEAR**

*The New York Times*

*Published: December 12, 2005*

WASHINGTON, Dec. 11 - Members of Congress will soon plunge into battle over the future of Medicaid as House and Senate negotiators try to resolve huge differences in legislation that would allow states to cut benefits and increase charges for millions of low-income people, including many children.

Medicaid is a flash point in a larger budget bill on which Republican leaders say they plan to reach agreement by year's end.

The Bush administration and the National Governors Association support changes approved last month by the House as a way to curb the explosive growth of Medicaid, which is financed jointly by the federal government and the states.

Many federal and state officials have concluded that Medicaid, which insures more than 50 million low-income people, is unsustainable in its current form. The cost shot up 54 percent in the past five years and now exceeds \$300 billion a year.

Gov. Mark Warner of Virginia, a Democrat, said earlier this year that Medicaid was "on the road to a meltdown" and would "bankrupt all the states" if Congress did not intervene.

But senators of both parties, advocates for poor people and public health groups, including the March of Dimes and the American Academy of Pediatrics, oppose many provisions of the House bill. The changes, they say, would harm children and disabled people of all ages who rely on Medicaid.

The Senate bill would keep benefits intact. It would expand Medicaid, by allowing parents of severely disabled children to buy coverage and by stepping up efforts to enroll people already eligible.

In the past few years, many states have trimmed Medicaid benefits and restricted eligibility for adults. But Sara Rosenbaum, a professor of health law and policy at George Washington University, said the House bill would be "the first significant retrenchment in federal health benefits and coverage for children."

The House bill makes three major changes:

¶ States could charge premiums and higher co-payments for a wide range of Medicaid benefits, including prescription drugs, doctors' services and hospital care.

¶ States could scale back benefits, capping or eliminating coverage for services now guaranteed by federal law.

¶ States could end Medicaid coverage for people who failed to pay premiums for 60 days or more.

Pharmacists could refuse to fill prescriptions, and doctors and hospitals could deny services, for Medicaid recipients who did not make the required co-payments.

Under current Medicaid law, a health care provider cannot deny care or services because of a person's inability to pay.

On Medicaid, as on other issues, the Senate could agree to accept some provisions of the House bill as part of a compromise.

In a detailed analysis of the House bill, the Congressional Budget Office predicted that 70,000 to 110,000 people would lose Medicaid coverage for failure to pay premiums. It estimated that states would establish co-payments for 11 million Medicaid recipients, half of them children, and increase existing co-payments for an additional 6 million people.

"In sum," the budget office said, "we expect that about 17 million people - 27 percent of Medicaid enrollees - would ultimately be affected by the cost-sharing provisions of the bill." Certain groups of beneficiaries and certain services would be exempt from the changes authorized by the House bill.

Under current law, Medicaid officials cannot charge co-payments for children under 18 and cannot charge for specific services like emergency care. For other services and for prescription drugs, the maximum co-payment is generally \$3.

Democrats, who are generally opposed to the House and Senate budget bills, are excluded from the current negotiations. The chief negotiators on Medicaid are Representative Joe L. Barton of Texas and Senator Charles E. Grassley of Iowa, both Republicans.

Mr. Barton, the chairman of the House Committee on Energy and Commerce, said that higher co-payments were needed to "encourage personal responsibility" among Medicaid beneficiaries.

"Co-payments have not changed in 20 years, and they're unenforceable, to boot," Mr. Barton said.

But Representative John D. Dingell, Democrat of Michigan, said, "Under the House bill, beneficiaries will see their co-payments increase much faster than their income, and that will reduce their ability to get medically necessary care."

In 2003, when Oregon expanded its Medicaid program, it received federal permission to charge premiums of \$6 to \$20 a month for certain new beneficiaries. It charged co-payments of \$5 for a doctor's office visit, \$2 or \$3 for most prescription drugs, and \$15 for some medicines.

Tina D. Edlund, research manager at the Oregon Office for Health Policy and Research, said: "The co-payments discouraged both appropriate and inappropriate use of services. Of the 90,000 people who were subject to premiums, 40,000 dropped off the rolls, and the poorest of the poor were disproportionately affected."

"We thought the premiums were relatively small," Ms. Edlund said, "but for people with very low incomes, they proved to be significant."

At public hospitals and children's hospitals, doctors worry that some Medicaid recipients, faced with premiums and higher co-payments, will go without drugs and doctors' services, and their conditions will worsen.

"People dropped from Medicaid for failure to pay premiums will become uninsured," said Dr. Patricia A. Gabow, chief executive of the Denver Health system, which runs a public hospital and 20 clinics in Colorado. "They will delay care and end up with costly complications."

About one-sixth of all Medicaid recipients qualify for coverage because of mental or physical disabilities. They see Medicaid as indispensable because it pays for therapy, rehabilitation, personal care services and equipment they need to work and to perform basic activities of daily living.

"The Medicaid package is far better than private insurance," said Martha E. Ford, a lobbyist for the Arc, formerly known as the Association for Retarded Citizens.

Parents of children with severe disabilities - even some who can afford private health insurance - want to be able to buy Medicaid coverage for their children. The budget bill passed by the Senate would allow them to do that.

"It's consistent with the compassionate conservative agenda advanced by the president," said Mr. Grassley, the chairman of the Senate Finance Committee.

Mr. Grassley's vision of Medicaid is fundamentally different from that in the House bill. He would extend coverage to disabled children in families with low and moderate incomes, while the House would make it easier for states to cut back such coverage.

The House bill appears to protect children in families with incomes below the poverty level (about \$16,000 for a family of three). But it would allow states to decide how income should be defined.

The House bill closely follows bipartisan recommendations from the National Governors Association, which said states should have the option to increase co-payments and alter benefits to resemble commercial insurance.

Gov. Mike Huckabee of Arkansas, a Republican who is chairman of the association, said: "Governors are not looking for ways to cut people off and to make life more miserable for poor people. We are looking for ways to give at least some benefit to people who have nothing. The only way we can do that is to have a flexible package of benefits."

At the same time, negotiators have to take account of moderate Republican senators like Gordon H. Smith of Oregon. Mr. Smith voted for the Senate version of the budget bill but said he would vote against the final version if it cut Medicaid benefits or coverage.

On this issue, he said, he is "unwilling to compromise."

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# Warming center for homeless not ready

By: Michelle Swartz story updated December 09, 2005 11:24AM  
*Monroe News.com*

As snow falls on Monroe County, plans for a warming and cooling center for the homeless continue to develop.

The snow beat the Salvation Army to the punch.

As snow falls on Monroe County, plans for a warming and cooling center for the homeless continue to develop.

"Our next step is to submit a site plan," said Major Jimmy Wilson of the Salvation Army. "We are following the city's steps before we're authorized to use it. We're hoping to do that quickly because of the weather.

"If we don't get it done this winter, we'll have something in line next winter."

The Salvation Army developed a pilot program that offers the homeless a place to stay when the weather turns extremely cold or hot. The center would be located at Salvation Army's Corps Community Center, 1018 E. Second St. It would be open on days when it's most dangerous for homeless people to be outside.

Salvation Army officials have been following the necessary steps needed to open the center.

"So far, it's been a smooth process, so we hope to open as soon as possible," he said. "We're confident it will work out."

It can't happen soon enough; Family Manor, Salvation Army's homeless shelter, is at full capacity with 36 residents.

"We are usually at full capacity, plus another 15 families are on the waiting list," Major Wilson said. "We rarely find ourselves with an empty bed. At this point, there's not a lot we can do. That's why the warming and cooling center is such a critical project for us."

Several Detroit shelters said they were at or above capacity Thursday, and those in Mount Clemens, Pontiac and Warren said they expected to reach capacity soon.

At the Detroit Rescue Mission, the normal capacity of 80 beds was exceeded by more than 20 Thursday, and some people slept on mattresses on the floor.

# Everyday living a struggle for Detroit's homeless

*Written by Patrick Keating and Cornelius A. Fortune*

**MICHIGAN CHRONICLE STAFF WRITERS**

*Friday, 09 December 2005*

At 18, Thomas, now 24, had developed a drug problem and his parents threw him out of the house. It took him four years on the streets to seek help.

Bobbie James, 55, had spent the last six years on the streets, sleeping wherever he could rest his head. His life had not always been like this. He had been a man with a job, a wife, and two stepchildren. Sometimes he didn't think he would make it through the night, but that was before he came to Mariner's Inn.

Mariner's Inn offers drug rehabilitation services to homeless men in Detroit. They come through the Department of Health and Wellness Promotion, and must be homeless and have a drug addiction. Mariner's Inn tries to provide them with coping skills and other mechanisms necessary to prevent relapse back into substance abuse.

The non-profit human service agency typically grants a 90-day stay to the men. Afterward, there is an extended residency program for men with either mental or physical disabilities, as well as a transitional housing program. Both are available to those who complete the residential program.

Calvin Thomas had also come to Mariner's Inn. Thomas is in the initial residency program.

James is in the transitional housing program. Both men talked about their battles with drug addiction and their struggles to survive on the streets because of those addictions.

Thomas, who was homeless from age 18 to 22, didn't finish school, so he never really had a steady job.

"Once I got introduced to drugs, my family didn't want anything to do with me. They kind of put me out there," he said, adding that he had also burned bridges with friends.

He found himself sleeping in abandoned buildings and getting food from the garbage cans of fast food restaurants after they had closed.

At 22, his family gave him another chance. However, a few weeks after his 23rd birthday, they put him back out because he started using drugs again. He came to Mariner's Inn a few weeks before his 24th birthday.

"I came here on June 3," he said. "I call it my re-birth day now."

Thomas says he is thankful and feels blessed and that he could not have come to this point without God's grace. He also said the drugs had altered his mind so much that he couldn't see the positive.

"It used to have me thinking that negative was the right thing, like sticking people up. I didn't know better then," he said.

James had become homeless due to crack and alcohol. At 22, while working at Ford Motor Co., he had a mild heart attack, due to his drinking. He stopped drinking at that time, but started smoking marijuana, not realizing he was setting himself up for another downfall.

"I was staying at this drug house," he recalled. "I didn't want to leave but I had to leave. I was wearing the same clothes over and over again. Sometimes I'd try to justify myself by dusting my clothes, saying, 'I'm all right.'"

When James became homeless six years ago, he was working at the Detroit Chassis Plant and living with his girlfriend. When she found out about his drug problems, she kicked him out.



“I used to do the weekend warrior thing, hanging out, getting high over the weekend. She found out and the door got slammed in my face. I had to go, and after that, it was like a downhill thing.”

He began feeling sorry for himself, and made the drugs his way of living. He did manage to stay clean for 18 months at one point. He said he used drugs to keep his mind off certain things.

Regarding safety and survival on the streets, James said he has seen many frightening things happen, and has often been in the wrong place at the wrong time.

“It was just a life or death situation at times,” he said. “I had to use judgment, and sometimes it was bad judgment. I used to just pray to God to get out of that place.”

# **'Generous' county employees pay up to dress down**

*Saturday, December 10, 2005*

*By Morgan Jarema*

*The Grand Rapids Press*

They are on the front lines of advocacy for needy families.

And the 300 employees of the **Kent County Department of Human Services** -- which provides the Santa Claus Girls with names of families that need help with children's gifts -- are willing to dig into their own pockets to help.

In 2003 and this year, employees raised nearly \$300 for the Press-sponsored charity, donating at least \$5 each to wear jeans to work one Friday.

"Our people are so generous," said Mary Tubergen, an administrative assistant who for five years has tracked donations for the agency's casual days.

Tubergen's boss, Kathleen Greiner, first pitched the idea to make Santa Claus Girls a recipient of the agency's casual Friday fundraisers.

"We've been involved with the Santa Claus Girls for years and years," Greiner said. "We are part of the effort, and we really appreciate what Santa Claus Girls does for the people we help."

Santa Claus Girls is one of dozens of charities that have benefitted from the Kent agency's casual Fridays, which started in 1998.

Other groups that have received donations include the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation, Red Cross Hurricane Katrina Relief, Grand Rapids Public Schools, the Women's Resource Center and the Equestrian Therapeutic Riding Center.

To date, county employees have dressed down to raise more than \$93,700 for charity.

"They really give back, let alone work with the system," Tubergen said. "They're very giving people here."

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# Buy a tree and help a needy family

By SHERI MCWHIRTER

*Record-Eagle staff writer*

*December 11, 2005*

GRAYLING - The air is freezing cold, and Tom Coors' heavy breathing is visible while he schleps a Douglas fir into the back of a pickup.

Shari McCarthy, of Roscommon, pays the retired sheriff's deputy \$35 for the Christmas tree and thanks him for tying it down. She's headed home with what she calls her "most beautiful tree" and is glad she noticed the tree sale in the Kmart parking lot in Grayling.

The sale benefits a Crawford County Deputy Sheriff's Association fund, primarily to pay for the local Cops for Kids Christmas program.

"We try to make sure they have clothes, pants, coats, boots, hats and mittens," said Theresa Andrews, a sheriff's records clerk and association treasurer. "Then the rest they spend how they want, on themselves or on gifts for family."

McCarthy said she didn't know the tree sale was a benefit program when she stopped, but decided to make a point to return.

"Every year I'll be back," she said.

Coors said many loyal customers return year after year to support the program and some make larger contributions. Donations and the tree sale raised about \$4,000 last year.

The money raised each year benefits about 15 children in the county from financially needy families who are chosen by school resource officers and school officials to participate in the program, now in its 10th year. The children are picked up by deputies on the last day of school before the winter break and taken to Kmart to spend about \$100 each.

"They get to pick out a toy for themselves and it's fun," Coors said.

The children eat dinner at the local Pizza Hut after their shopping trips and go home with a laundry basket full of food for a Christmas dinner with their families. The groceries are donated by the Grayling Eagles Club Ladies Auxiliary.

"Everything you need for a nice, Christmas dinner," Coors said.

The benefit fund also supports a local Little League baseball team and a youth hockey team in Kalkaska that is composed mostly of Grayling athletes.

# Warm the Children

*Sunday, December 11, 2005*  
*Ann Arbor News*

A program sponsored by The News that uses reader donations to buy winter clothing for needy children. The News pays all administrative costs, so a dollar donated is a dollar for a child.

When: Each autumn.

Amount raised since Nov. 13: \$ 101,539.

To donate: Please send a check to Warm the Children, c/o The Ann Arbor News, P.O. Box 1147, Ann Arbor MI, 48106-1147.

For more information: (734) 994-6733 or access [www.mlive.com/aanews/warm/](http://www.mlive.com/aanews/warm/).

*Sunday, December 11, 2005*  
*Oakland Briefs*  
*Detroit News*

**Waterford**

## Honors society collects food, money

Members of the Alpha Omicron Kappa chapter of the Phi Theta Kappa International Honors Society at Oakland Community College's Highland Lakes campus last month raised more than \$600 and collected 400 pounds of canned and dry food for local charities. The students raised the money from concession stand sales at campus events and through returnable can collections. The food was donated to the Oakland County Food Bank before Thanksgiving, and the money was donated to the Red Cross of Southern Michigan, the United Service Organization, the Oakland County Food Bank and a local animal shelter.

## Editorials

# Help! 211

## Resources to the rescue for non-emergencies

December 11, 2005  
Detroit Free Press

Soon, 211 should fly off the fingertips as easily -- and more often -- than 911. A non-emergency help line, coordinated by the United Way for Southeastern Michigan, 211 is designed to let people having troubles find the help they need -- and let potential helpers know how they can pitch in. Consider it a clearinghouse for health and human service agencies as well as volunteer opportunities.

The program, a great benefit in hurricane-stricken regions that lost their 911 service earlier this year, has existed for a while in western Michigan. But getting metro Detroit, with 40% of the state's population, on board was a big step toward getting the toll-free 211 system up and running statewide, anticipated for 2007. That paves the way for even greater coordination across geographic boundaries -- everyone knows tragedy respects no map lines -- and bringing cell phone users into the network.

You don't have to weather a natural disaster to dial into 211's assistance; the service is there for anyone who has hit a bump in the road, whether what's needed is health care, food, job skills or just plain information.

*For more information about the 211 system, or the services the United Way provides, go to [www.uwsem.org](http://www.uwsem.org).*

# State to tighten welfare

Sweeping reforms would set lifetime limit of four years; critics fear lack of safety net for poor.

*Gary Heinlein and Charlie Cain  
Detroit News Lansing Bureau  
December 12, 2005*

**LANSING--** Michigan, which pioneered reforms that led to plummeting welfare rolls across the nation, is poised to adopt additional cuts that proponents say will free those still trapped on public assistance.

But advocates for the poor say the cuts are too deep.

At the heart of the most sweeping welfare change here in a decade is a proposal to set a lifetime limit of 48 months' worth of benefits for those on welfare. While other states have adopted such policies, Michigan, until now, has opted not to impose time limits.

One measure the Republican-led Legislature expects to adopt this week also would cut off assistance for recipients -- permanently, under one proposal -- for those who consistently fail to comply with work and training requirements. Another would reduce the amount received by those whose disabilities qualify them for federal Social Security payments.

"We believe this plan strengthens our current welfare policies," said Sen. Bill Hardiman, R-Kentwood, one of the chief architects of the reforms. "Under this plan, recipients will be given the necessary tools to succeed and move off assistance."

A decidedly conservative Republican majority in the Legislature is eager to continue Michigan's transformation from a onetime welfare haven. The state has lagged its neighbors in imposing new restrictions: Indiana has a two-year limit on public assistance, Ohio three and Illinois five.

But groups such as the influential Michigan Catholic Conference say adoption of the plan would shred the state's fragile safety net.

Their estimates regarding the scope of what's contemplated exceed a House Fiscal Agency estimate that the proposals would remove about 8,100 families, representing 20,000 people, from the welfare rolls.

"Term limits on receipt of cash assistance in Michigan would place at least 36,000 children at significant risk if their parents could not successfully exit the public welfare system in 48 months," the conference, along with the Michigan League for Human Services and 13 other groups advocating for the poor, said in a letter last week to Gov. Jennifer Granholm.

The groups were surprised and upset that the governor had publicly said she saw nothing wrong with putting a four-year restriction on public help for able-bodied residents with poverty-level incomes. Their letter prompted Granholm to clarify her earlier statement, raising doubts about whether she would sign the legislation.

Such limits "are not appropriate for those who are working but have not achieved self-sufficiency or for those vulnerable populations who have a barrier to employment," she wrote in a Dec. 2 letter to Hardiman. She added that the populations include "those in poverty caring for children, those contemplating training that will secure employment, or those living with a medical condition that prevents employment."

Packages of bills pending in the House and Senate also contain these provisions:

Anyone on welfare for 36 months or more would have 60 days to develop a self-sufficiency plan.

The state would provide help for up to two years of job training, but those in post-secondary education programs would have to maintain a 2.5 grade-point average and a 90 percent attendance rate.

A "three-strike" rule would allow authorities to suspend benefits to any recipient who violated welfare program training and work rules three times.

Federal Social Security assistance received by the disabled would be deducted from their state allotments for the first time. Senate legislation would deduct 20 percent, House legislation 100 percent.

A recipient who is complying with the requirements but unable to find work because of depressed local economic conditions could qualify for a 12-month benefits extension.

Backers of the reforms note that even if benefits are cut off, some people would still qualify for food stamps and home heating aid.

While proponents seek consensus on the final plan, other lawmakers continue to express grave doubts.

Rep. George Cushingberry, D-Detroit, warned that the reforms would result in more crime as the neediest of Michigan residents were stripped of assistance.

"It's so hypocritical for us to streamline things for business but not for people at the bottom," Cushingberry said of legislation to reduce business taxes that also is pending this week.

With portions of Michigan's welfare plan set to expire at year's end, fears that the governor could veto the reform package have prompted lawmakers to ready a bill that would extend the current program through 2006.

Opponents of the measures consider them especially distressing at a time when Michigan consistently ranks in the top two or three states in unemployment and economists predict the state will see no net gain in jobs throughout the coming year.

Michigan job losses have helped swell state welfare rolls by 13 percent during five years of recession.

The same troubles have put Michigan in a dilemma over how to spend a constricted state budget.

Republicans believe the best longer-term strategy is belt-tightening in order to cut taxes and attract high-tech industries that create jobs of the future.

Further, the Bush administration and Republicans in Congress are contemplating budget reductions that would slash Michigan funding for child support collections by \$59 million over the next five years and its allotment for Medicaid by as much as \$1 billion over the same period.

All of that would further strain the state's welfare budget.

Detroit residents Regina Steen and her 6-year-old daughter, Ameir, appear to be the types of welfare recipients Granholm hopes the state would continue to protect. They have received benefits for about six years.

"Some people need it," said Steen, a 28-year-old single mother. "Some people have no choice."

Steen, who said she has a learning disability, dropped out of Detroit's Denby High School after her junior year and lives with her mother.

She receives \$282 a month in assistance for her daughter, plus \$49 a month in food stamps -- a total of about \$4,500 a year.

She has held temporary jobs as a cook and would like to earn a high school equivalency diploma but right now has little prospect of landing a job that would make her financially independent.

Advocates for the poor say Steen and her daughter are among Michiganians who still need help despite an array of programs ushered in since ex-Gov. John Engler dramatically shifted the welfare debate in Michigan. In 1991, his first year as governor, Engler eliminated general assistance to 83,000 able-bodied adults without children.

The following year, Michigan received waivers from federal rules that allowed it to implement a program called To Strengthen Michigan Families that required welfare recipients to work, attend school or job training classes, or perform community service 20 hours a week. Those failing to meet the requirements face reduced state aid.

The federal waivers were necessary because the state gets \$750 million a year for welfare from the federal government and puts up \$428 million as its share.

The state's public assistance overhaul continued in 1994 with Work First, a program that requires recipients to be searching for work or working at least 20 hours a week within 60 days of going on welfare. Only about 5 percent of recipients are exempt. In 1996, the state initiated Project Zero, whose object was to have no families on public assistance who had no earned income in selected counties.

Based largely on successes in Michigan and neighboring Wisconsin, President Clinton got Congress to enact the nation's own sweeping welfare-to-work revisions in 1996. The number of people on welfare in the United States has plunged from a 1994 peak of over 14 million to about 5 million.



Michigan, despite recent increases, has about 78,300 welfare cases representing 212,000 people. There were 223,600 cases in 1994, representing 665,000 residents.

Those on the rolls today receive a monthly average payment per household of \$415, or about \$5,000 a year. Advocates note that Michigan hasn't raised the basic stipend for recipients in over a decade.

During a Senate debate on the reforms, Sen. Shirley Johnson, R-Troy, argued that it was unrealistic to expect those recipients to easily transition into the work force.

"We're down to the pretty hard-core situations," said Johnson, the only Republican senator to vote against the main bill in the package when it first cleared the Senate.

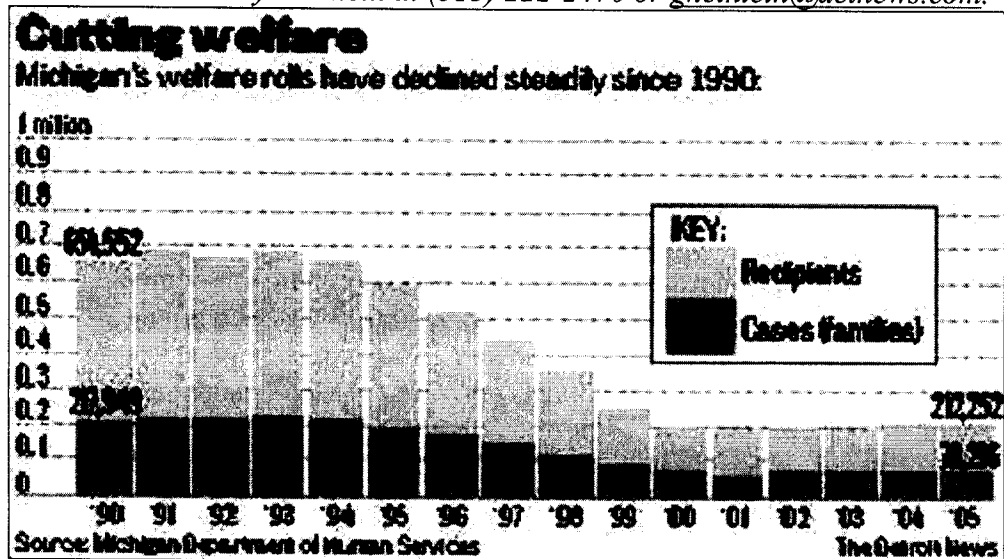
"You go ahead and take them off. You're still going to be taking care of them," Johnson said. "Don't sit here and be judgmental. You don't have the right."

Caution about cutting off assistance also is urged by former welfare recipient Tracey Rucker, a 36-year-old mother of two who needed 10 years to find her way off public assistance. Rucker, of Detroit, works in a special neighborhood program that teaches parents to set up an at-home preschool curriculum for 4- and 5-year-olds.

She said part of the reason she was able to get off welfare was the help she received from her parents during rough times. They cared for her son and daughter while she attended school.

"Others don't have that. There are barriers. They don't have transportation, or there's no child care," Rucker said. "Just cutting them off is not going to work. There are going to be a lot of hungry children."

*You can reach Gary Heinlein at (313) 222-2470 or [gheinlein@detnews.com](mailto:gheinlein@detnews.com).*



## Letters to the editor

### **FROM OUR READERS: Congress votes; poor kids pay**

*December 12, 2005*

*Detroit Free Press*

Shame on Michigan's Republican members of Congress for voting for a budget reconciliation bill that not only cuts support for child support enforcement -- costing Michigan alone \$249 million in federal funding -- but that will also cut the food stamp program and Medicaid ("Foolish Savings: Cutting funds to collect child support will only prove costly," Dec. 7).

In other words, in the wake of the reality of poverty in our country that Hurricane Katrina brought home so vividly, those who have the least will have even more taken from them. What is even more shameful is that, if we let them, those same members of Congress intend to soon vote to approve a \$70-billion tax cut, the great majority of which will go to people with incomes of over \$200,000 per year.

**William Hickey**

*Detroit*

#### **A gift, at expense of poor**

Once again the Legislature has moved to cut welfare benefits to the poor. This confirms the unanimity of Republican members of the Legislature with their scrooge-like Republican counterparts in the Congress. These unending efforts are especially noteworthy at Christmas time, for such cuts are really a gift to the rest of us. Coming as they do, they make less likely the need for tax increases or other program cuts. These are gifts we can always count on in our time of need. Truly, the poor are the gift that keeps on giving. Thanks, legislators. Oh, by the way, do you ever think of cutting your own benefits?

**Grant Parker**

*Perry*

#### **Cutbacks hurt children**

Recently proposed federal funding cuts to child support enforcement are misguided and poor public policy. We know that child support can be an exceptionally effective antipoverty strategy. Studies suggest that half a million more children would be in poverty if no child support were paid.

Rigorous child support enforcement increases the amount of child support collected on behalf of children. These are precisely the activities that are at risk from the proposed funding cuts. Child support does more than just pay for a child's living expenses. Fathers are also more likely to have contact with their

children when they are paying child support. Child support, dollar-for-dollar, improves child education outcomes better than any other source of income, including earned income. Child support enforcement programs decrease child poverty, increase noncustodial father contact, and improve the academic success of children.

Since child support enforcement programs cost so little and have such great benefits, why are we not augmenting them instead of shrinking them?

**Royce Hutson**

*Assistant Professor, School of Social Work, Wayne State University*

*Published December 12, 2005*

*By Amy F. Bailey*

*Associated Press*

*[ From the Lansing State Journal ]*

## **Lawmakers try to wrap up welfare, tax bills**

### **Limits on benefits, breaks for business still divide parties**

Lawmakers are expected to finish work this week on legislation aimed at improving the state's welfare program, cutting taxes for manufacturers, and lowering the health insurance costs of K-12 schools and community colleges.

Legislators have a number of high-profile issues to wrap up on Tuesday before adjourning for the rest of the year.

While Republicans in the House and Senate appear to be close to an agreement on welfare reforms, some Democrats have not signed off on provisions that would set a four-year limit on benefits for able-bodied adults and strict penalties for program violations.

"There are many reasons why people need assistance for longer periods of time," said Rep. Chris Kolb, an Ann Arbor Democrat who is helping negotiate terms of the bills.

Democratic Gov. Jennifer Granholm has said four years should be enough time for adults who can work to move from welfare rolls to employment, but she does not want the same limits for those who are disabled, taking care of a disabled relative or mentally ill.

Some advocacy groups are worried that limiting adults to four years of cash assistance, even if it's spread out over a long period of time, would hurt individuals and families who suffer an unexpected injury or lose a job when the state's economy slows down.

Some Republicans, however, argue that limiting cash assistance for people who can work will give them an incentive to take advantage of new opportunities to get an education or receive training to help them get into a new career instead of a minimum wage job.

A four-year limit on aid would affect about 20,000 individuals, including many children, according to a nonpartisan House Fiscal Agency analysis. About 212,000 people currently receive cash assistance, which is an average \$415 a month, the agency said.

Democrats and Republicans also remain split over penalties for recipients who do not comply with education or job training requirements.

Legislation that would give Michigan businesses credit on taxes they pay on equipment appears less controversial among lawmakers.

Granholm, however, said she would not sign the bills if Congress goes ahead with significant reductions in funding for programs aimed at low-income residents, such as Medicaid and welfare. She said the state could not afford the reduction and tax cuts at the same time.

"If in fact they provide a billion dollars in cuts to Michigan over the next four years all bets are off," the governor said last week.

The bills would provide a 15 percent credit starting Jan. 1 for taxes businesses pay on equipment. It also would provide a 100 percent personal property tax credit in 2007 and 2008 for businesses that bring jobs into Michigan and continue for four years tax breaks for troubled auto suppliers Delphi Corp. and Visteon Corp. that were set to end later this month.

The bills are tied together and cannot take effect unless all are signed.

The House also is expected to take up Senate-approved bills aimed at removing barriers for school districts seeking to insure their employees themselves or self-insure with other districts.

*Letters to the Editor*  
*Lansing State Journal*  
*December 11, 2005*

## **Welfare abuse clear**

I read with interest the Dec. 4 editorial on welfare.

If, as you stated, people on welfare for extended periods of time lack education, job skills or even basic life skills, why is it that they have no problem having children? It seems that if you don't have basic life skills, you probably shouldn't have children. Understandably, there are people on welfare trying to better themselves.

But I support stricter time limits for being on welfare for able-bodied people. There are too many people using the system, and unfortunately it will hurt those people who aren't.

Those people who do abuse the system need to know that at some point, they are going to be held responsible for themselves and their children.

Those other people who are trying to better themselves, and who want to take care of their families by supporting them financially, should receive more help than those choosing to do nothing.

***Tina Zimmerman***  
***Haslett***

*Letters to the Editor*  
*Grand Rapids Press*  
*December 12, 2005*

## **Welfare reform disaster**

When Hurricane Katrina struck, many in America were horrified that the poor were left behind to starve, to thirst, to become sick and to die. The excuses were many but the reason remains: the poor are not a government priority.

As corporations earn greater profits by displacing American workers with cheap overseas labor, our communities will have more people needing assistance.

Our Legislature's answer? Make it harder for them to get it. Punish them if they don't cross their T's and dot their I's. Perpetuate the myth that welfare is where our tax dollars are spent -- when in reality a small percent of government spending goes to helping our own poor.

I remember when Gov. Engler reformed welfare. In 2002, a "welfare mom" was carrying my unborn granddaughter. The day before Angelique was stillborn, this mom was out walking miles through slush and snow looking for a job because her benefits had run out -- even though her doctor had prescribed bed rest.

Every poor person has a face, a story, a life, a reason, and it usually isn't about being "lazy." A higher good charges us to care for those in need, not kick them when they're down.

ESTELLE SLOOTMAKER  
Wyoming

# Column: Good policy, not good politics, should be aim of welfare reform

*Sunday, December 11, 2005*

*By Peter Luke*

*Booth Newspapers*

At a handsome \$5,500 a year, who wouldn't want to stay on welfare forever?

That only a tiny fraction of adults with children living in poverty receive cash assistance beyond the 48-month time limit being proposed by lawmakers suggests that perhaps the financial rewards of welfare aren't so swell after all.

According to the Department of Human Services, fewer than 14,000 Michigan households have been on welfare for longer than four years. Of the some 50,000 individual recipients in those households, nearly 37,000 are children. The rest -- single parents caring for those children, disabled people or caretakers of a disabled family member -- are working and receiving wages. Characteristics of adults on long-term cash assistance include low rates of job skills, high levels of illiteracy and physical and mental health problems that far exceed those in the general population.

Given exemptions in welfare bills approved by the House and Senate that would provide continued benefits for those who can't work, the 48-month time limit in the end may not be much of a limit at all.

So backers apparently must figure the idea of imposing limits on welfare recipients will appeal to voters next year. Perhaps Gov. Jennifer Granholm thought so as well when she endorsed a benefits cap that her own Department of Human Services chief, Marianne Udow, opposed. Granholm's endorsement of time limits at a press conference was denounced by advocates for the poor who charged that the governor seemed to be backtracking on her commitment to "protect the safety and dignity of vulnerable families."

A day later, Granholm clarified her position. In a letter to Sen. Bill Hardiman, R-Kentwood, Granholm said time limits:

"Are not appropriate for those who are working but have not achieved self-sufficiency or for those vulnerable populations who have a barrier to employment." She included in that vulnerable category "those in poverty caring for children."

Since one-fifth of the state's long-term caseload is working, half are illiterate and still more are too physically or mentally ill to work, and most are in poverty caring for children, that would seem to exempt just about everyone from cutoff.

Except, that is, "able-bodied people with no barriers to self-sufficiency," she said. In other words, all those folks livin' large, paying the rent and the heating bill on \$459 a month with money left over for some of life's little luxuries.



The reality of that position, which perhaps will be reflected in bills she'll have an opportunity to sign, is that there will be no time limits in practice.

Crafting an assortment of compassionate exemptions and giving case workers the discretion to individually apply them renders time limits meaningless. As policy, anyway. As politics, perhaps not.

Signing a fresh batch of welfare "reform" bills helps Republicans who run the Legislature with base conservatives. It helps Granholm establish herself as a centrist moderate going into an election year when the GOP will try to paint her as a hopeless liberal.

While the notion of time limits may be popular with voters -- an arguable position given the level of economic anxiety in Michigan -- Granholm's conditional support for them angered advocates for the poor.

"This shouldn't be about politics, but about what is right and just and what is right and just is that there not be limits," said Paul Long of the Michigan Catholic Conference.

There are two types of time limits, continuous and lifetime.

Saying that 48 months "should be enough time to get back on one's feet," Granholm seemed to be supporting a limit only on continuous benefits, those awarded for four years straight. Lawmakers are pushing a lifetime maximum of 48 months of eligibility. That's different.

A mother with kids on cash assistance for 42 months, but then in the work force for the next 24, would be eligible for only six months of renewed help should economic calamity hit.

That's no safety net, which is the whole point of welfare to begin with.

# Slow down rush to reform welfare, get cracking on jobs

*Friday, December 9, 2005*  
*Bay City Times Editorial*

The Michigan Legislature is in a last-minute frenzy to adopt the most sweeping changes to state welfare programs since the early days of the Engler administration.

It's strange that legislators can find time to force able-bodied adults to find work, but still can't manage to help the businesses that might employ those workers.

The state House of Representatives was voting at a dead run late the night of Dec. 1, when it passed a package of welfare reform bills introduced just 10 days before.

The Senate, too, quickly pushed through three welfare-reform bills on Dec. 1. Those bills were introduced just a few weeks before, on Nov. 10.

What's the rush?

Some welfare reform provisions are due to expire at the end of this year.

So legislators are hurrying to meet that deadline.

They shouldn't.

Not on proposals designed to take welfare payments away from able-bodied adults after four years. Not when the entire state is poised to slide toward a job-robbing crash of its manufacturing sector.

The sentiment behind these last-minute proposals is solid. People who are able to work ought to work.

But what if there is no work?

House and Senate members have for almost a year delayed serious work on Gov. Jennifer Granholm's proposed business tax changes designed to help manufacturers stay in the state.

House and Senate conferees should delay final talks on welfare reform. Both houses of the Legislature should vote to continue current welfare programs for a few more months.

And they both need to get cracking on measures that would help employers stay in business.

Only then does it make sense to insist that every able-bodied person find work.

Once there is work.

*MIRS*  
*December 9, 2005*

## The Governor's Welfare Letter Flap

Gov. Jennifer **GRANHOLM**'s backers contended the welfare explanation letter she issued earlier this week was an attempt to clarify her position on ending welfare benefits for able-bodied recipients after 48 months, but two key Republicans have a decidedly different take.

In the correspondence (See "[Governor Describes Her 48-Month Support](#)", 12/5/05), Granholm said she favors the end of welfare benefits for "able-bodied people with no barriers to self-sufficiency currently left in our welfare system." But she also said the time limits "are not appropriate for those who are working but have not achieved self-sufficiency or for those vulnerable populations that have a barrier to employment."

"She wants it both ways," suggested Sen. Alan **CROPEY** (R-DeWitt), who sponsored the welfare cut-off bill.

"It seems like she is trying to back away from that right now," said Sen. Bill **HARDIMAN** (R-Grand Rapids), who received the Dec. 2 "clarification" correspondence signed by the Governor.

Cropsey said the governor wants to look as though she is "getting tough on welfare cheating," but at the same time she does not "want to offend her liberal constituency."

Hardiman is not as brash, but also wondered about the intent of her correspondence.

"I appreciate her wanting to explain her position," Hardiman said. "I don't see her argument about a 48-month time limit for those who have barriers to self-sufficiency. That doesn't hold any water because that's who we are serving."

Ironically it was the governor's comments at a news conference on Monday, Nov. 28, that convinced Hardiman to get off the fence on the time restraints.

"Quite frankly, on a personal basis, I was weighing not having a time limit," Hardiman said. "I think we could have made it work without a time limit, but when the governor came out and supported the time limit . . . think we can make it work that way, too."

Hardiman said he was surprised by the governor's news conference comments.

Cropsey said the Governor is playing politics with the issue. He felt she was initially expressing her "gut" feelings on the 48-month drop dead date but added that "the special interest groups got to her" and reminded her "you're supposed to be a liberal."

Sen. Irma **CLARK-COLEMAN** (D-Detroit) who worked on the Senate welfare study group came to Granholm's defense. She said the governor's position has been "pretty clear" all along and she rejected the Cropsey opinion that the governor wants it both ways on the controversial issue.